



Season For Nonviolence 2025

Week 6

Addressing Environmental Justice Through Nonviolent Action

“There can be no renewal of our relationship with nature without a renewal of humanity itself.”

Pope Francis

To our friends on the journey of the nonviolent Jesus,

Environmental justice is connected to nonviolence because the movement advocates for peaceful change. [Environmental Justice](#) is a critical framework for understanding and addressing the intersection of environmental issues and social equity. By advocating for fair treatment, participatory decision-making, and sustainable practices, the movement seeks to rectify historical injustices and create healthier environments for all. As society continues to grapple with pressing environmental challenges, the principles of Environmental Justice will be essential in guiding equitable solutions.

In The Know and a brief historical timeline

At its most basic level, environmental justice asserts that environmental issues and social justice are inextricably linked. Environmental activism is not just about protecting the natural world—it is also about protecting people. Pope Francis had stated in *Laudato Si*, “Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest.”

- Environmental justice did not gain widespread meaning and momentum in the United States until the latter half of the 20th century.
- In 1968, Black activists came together during the [Memphis Sanitation Strike](#) to fight for better working conditions for Memphis garbage workers.
- A [1987 study](#) was the first of its kind to highlight the significant correlation between race and toxic waste site locations.

- In 1990, Dr. Bullard published *Dumping in Dixie*, the nation's first book on environmental injustice.
- A [2021 report from the US Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA) shows how climate change is harming vulnerable populations in the United States and President Joe Biden issued an executive order to establish the first White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council.

([What Environmental Justice Means- and Why it Matters, The Goldman Environmental Prize.](#))

Nonviolent Heroes Addressing Environmental Justice:

The Rights of Nature Movement



“We need to start to rebuild our relationship with Mother Earth again. Let us stand together and speak up for voices who do not get heard like the plants, animals, birds, and insects. Let us remember we are a part of this land and not separate from it.”

[Anahkwet \(Guy Reiter\) Menominee and Rights of Nature communities](#)

We recognize that nature - water, land, animals - have a right to exist and to be healthy. The natural world does not exist solely to be exploited for economic gain. Humanity is part of the natural world, not its owner. Rights of Nature Wisconsin is a movement that has grown from the work of Menikanaehkem, “Community Re-builders” – a grassroots organization on the Menominee Indian Reservation, and WISDOM, a Wisconsin network of mostly progressive faith-based groups working for social justice.

As of May 2024, close to 500 [rights of nature laws](#) exist at the local to national levels in 40 countries, including dozens of cities and counties throughout the United States. They take the form of constitutional provisions, treaty agreements, statutes, local ordinances, and court decisions.

Take a quiz!

[Environmental Justice Quiz!](#)

What does Scripture say?

You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority—the flocks and the herds and all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and everything that swims the ocean currents. O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!

Psalms 8:6-8. NLT (New Living Translation)

Who To Contact in Milwaukee?

[Catholic Ecology Center](#)

[Urban Ecology Center](#)

Originally, we intended to use the Environmental Justice EPA [link](#), but as you can see, it was removed. Please instead visit the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewer District [Vision 2035](#).

Active Nonviolence Opportunities: Environmental Justice

Easy: Join Our Lady of Lourdes families for a spring service event: [Milwaukee River Keepers Clean Up](#), April 26, 9:00-12:00.

A Bit More: Explore the seven goals from the [Laudato Si Action Platform](#). Identify one concrete action that you and your family can commit to during this Jubilee Year.

All In: According to the documentary [Cowspiracy](#), a person who follows a vegan diet produces 50% less carbon dioxide, uses 13x less water, and uses 18x less land than meat-eaters. That saves 1,100 gallons of water, 30 square feet of forested land, and 20 pounds of CO2 equivalent every day! Try [Meatless Monday](#) as a first step.

Remember to mark your calendars for Friday, April 4, when Season For Nonviolence participants will gather for a film related to nonviolence at OLOL at 6:30 pm.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Amen